

ALL TOGETHER NOW



Submitted Photo

Area community college presidents Drs. Billy Stewart of East Central, Scott Elliott of Meridian, Thomas Huebner of East Mississippi and Jesse Smith of Jones County Junior College put their hands together, symbolizing their commitment to “team up” to help build a vibrant workforce for the East Central Mississippi Region through customized training programs offered by their respective institutions.

Community college presidents envision regional workforce effort

Special to the Star

Area community college presidents met this week to reaffirm their commitment to working together on the development of a strong regional workforce – one that will keep existing industry healthy and help to attract new industry.

Drs. Jesse Smith of Jones County Junior College, Billy Stewart of East Central Community College, Thomas Huebner of East Mississippi Community College and Scott Elliott of Meridian Community College came together to discuss the need to grow the region’s workforce through both Career & Technical degree and certificate programs as well as fast-track customized training.

“Our region has tremendous

capacity for workforce training,” Elliott said. “When you consider that we have four community colleges and two major research universities geographically located in the region, it’s clear that we can meet any training needs – present and future – of industry. The four of us got together this week because we want the people of our region to be assured that we are committed to pooling our resources, as the need arises, to grow a dynamic workforce for the region on an ongoing basis.”

Elliott noted that MCC has by far the smallest geographic district (one-half of one county) in the state among the 15 community colleges, yet it engaged in nearly 14,000 individual customized training activities last year. He cited that as “an example of the kind of effort the colleges in the region are making on workforce development.”

Smith, who is also the current chairman of the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges, echoed Elliott’s sentiments.

“It’s an exciting time for this region,” he said. “Our colleges, for the most part, are located in close

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- Dr. Scott Elliott MCC

proximity to major interstates and industrial park sites. As a region, we have the population base and the training capacity to produce the kind of skilled workforce that will prove attractive to prospective industry – whether it’s automotive, aerospace, medical or whatever. All of our colleges are focused on STEM-centered training activities

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THE MERIDIAN STAR

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

Since 1898

\$1.00

YOUR STAR, YOUR WORLD

MRVF-58

April 18, 2016

East Central Community College
Dr. Billy W. Stewart
275 W Broad St
Decatur, MS 39327

Dr. Stewart,

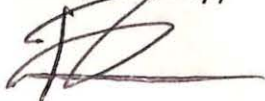
It is with great appreciation that we write today concerning you and the other three community colleges in our region. Your recent press release regarding your collaborative work is definitely worth noting. We applaud your leadership in our workforce efforts, both for existing industries within the region and for new industries we are working to attract.

We understand your focus is working collaboratively with the other three community colleges to ... "grow the region's workforce through both Career & Technical degree and certificate programs as well as fast-track customized training".

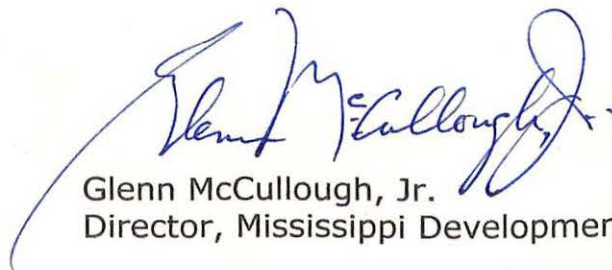
As was stated in the February 24, 2016 press release, it is an exciting time for our region. We do have the population and training capacity needed to attract prospective industry. And, we do have four community colleges within our region that are part of the Mississippi Community College System that was recently rated No. 1 in the nation!

Dr. Stewart, to you, Dr. Elliott (Meridian Community College), Dr. Huebner (East Mississippi Community College) and Dr. Smith (Jones County Jr. College), we just want to say "thank you".

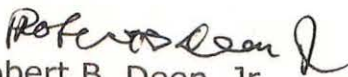
Respectfully,



Robert E. Luke
Chairman, EMBDC



Glenn McCullough, Jr.
Director, Mississippi Development Authority



Robert B. Deen, Jr.
Chairman, Riley Foundation



Robert F. Ward
Chairman, Hardin Foundation